

Applic. No.: 09/833,260
Amtd. Dated March 21, 2005
Reply to Office action of December 21, 2004

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration of the application is requested.

Claims 52, 54-56, 58-59, 61, 63-71, and 78-107 remain in the application. Claims 52 and 105 have been amended. Claims 1-51, 53, 57, 60, 62, and 72-77 have been cancelled. Claims 78-104 have been withdrawn. Rejoinder of withdrawn method claims 78-104 has been requested.

In item 3 on pages 2-3 of the above-identified Office action, the drawings have been objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a) as not showing every feature of the invention specified in the claims.

More specifically, the Examiner has stated that the limitation "an intermediate carrier" as recited in claim 60 must be shown or the feature(s) cancelled from the claim(s).

Claim 60 has been cancelled.

In item 4 on page 3 of the above-identified Office action, claim 52 has been objected to because of an informality.

The Examiner's suggested correction has been made.

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In item 5 on pages 3-4 of the above-identified Office action, claim 105 has been rejected as being indefinite under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

More specifically, the Examiner has stated that with regard to the limitations "said contact area having a shortest linear dimension" and "said shortest linear dimension of said contact area" as recited in claims 105, it is not clear from the specification what value of the linear dimension is considered to be the shortest for the microscopically small contact area.

This rejection is not understood. Applicant believes that it is clear that the contact area has linear dimensions, one of which is the shortest. Applicant fails to understand why the Examiner thinks that the shortest linear dimension should have a value.

It is accordingly believed that the claims meet the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. Should the Examiner find any further objectionable items, counsel would appreciate a telephone call during which the matter may be resolved.

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In item 7 on pages 4-8 of the above-mentioned Office action, claims 105-107 have been rejected as being unpatentable over Yanof et al. (US 5,476,818) in view of Khandros et al. (US 5,917,707) under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

Applicant does not quite understand this rejection because claim 105 includes all the features of allowable claim 52 and the further feature that the contact element is configured as a contact point having a diameter not greater than half of the shortest linear dimension of the contact area.

Nevertheless, claim 105 has been modified into a dependent claim depending on claim 52 in order to facilitate prosecution. Claims 105-107 are believed to be allowable because they are dependent on allowable claim 52.

Applicants acknowledge the Examiner's statement in item 8 on page 8 of the above-mentioned Office action that claims 52, 54-56, and 58-71 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the objections set forth above.

Claim 52 has been rewritten to overcome the objections set forth above. Since claims 54-56, 58-59, 61, and 63-71 are dependent on allowable claim 52, they are believed to be

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allowable in dependent form. Claims 60 and 62 have been cancelled.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of claims 52, 54-56, 58-59, 61, 63-71, and 105-107 are solicited. Rejoinder of method claims 78-104 is requested upon allowance of product claims 52, 54-56, 58-59, 61, 63-71, and 105-107 under MPEP 821.04 ("if applicant elects claims directed to the product, and a product claim is subsequently found allowable, withdrawn process claims which depend from or otherwise include all the limitations of the allowable product claim will be rejoined").

In the event the Examiner should still find any of the claims to be unpatentable, counsel would appreciate a telephone call so that, if possible, patentable language can be worked out.

If an extension of time for this paper is required, petition for extension is herewith made. Please charge any fees which might be due with respect to 37 CFR Sections 1.16 and 1.17 to

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Respectfully submitted,

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March 21, 2005

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